DBH Division of Behavioral Health

Missouri Department of Mental Health
Division of Behavioral Health

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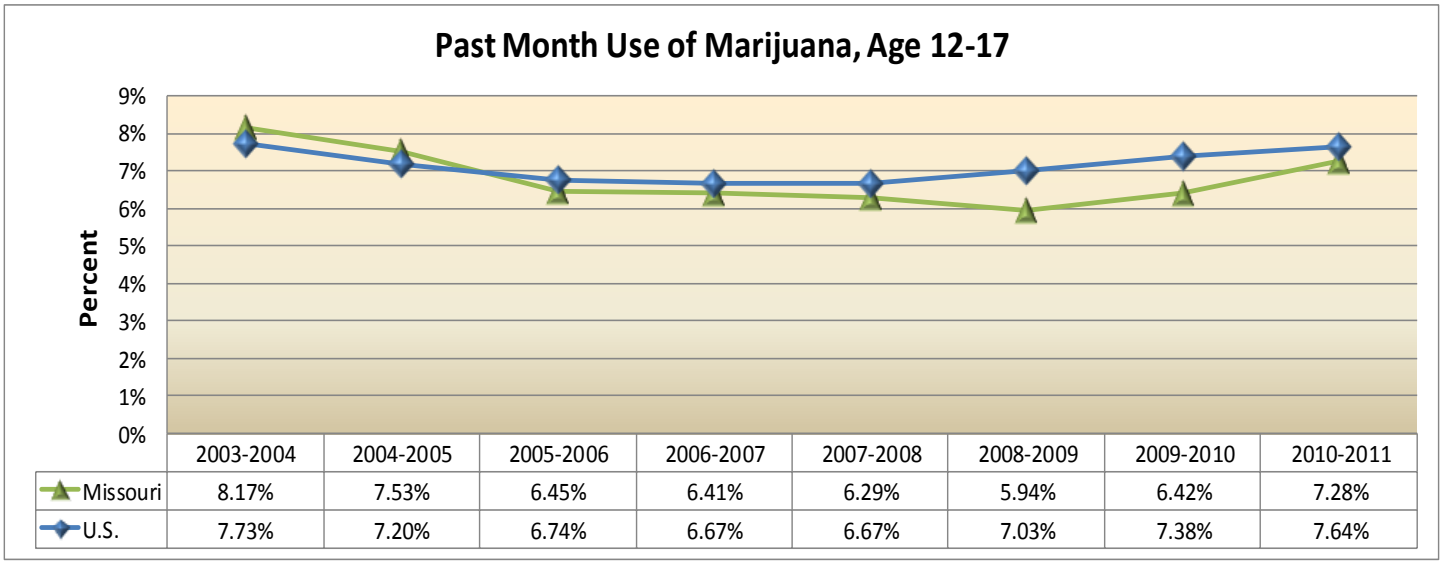
Youth Use of Marijuana Increasing

Youth use of marijuana is on the increase after declines during the early to mid 2000's. The most recent survey data from the National Household Survey on Drug Use and Health shows that 7.28 percent of Missouri youth age 12 to 17 have used marijuana in the past month—up from the 5.94 percent who reported past month use in 2008/2009 (SAMHSA, 2012). It is estimated that about 9 to 17 percent of youth who use marijuana will develop addiction (NIDA, 2012). The American Psychiatric Association characterizes cannabis (marijuana) use disorder, formerly referred to as abuse or dependence, as having two or more of the following symptoms: 1) using more than what was intended; 2) having difficulty reducing or stopping use; 3) spending a lot of time getting, using, or recovering from use; 4) forgoing important activities because of use, 5) experiencing cravings; 6) having problems at school, work, or home because of use; 7) continuing use despite problems, 8) repeatedly using in hazardous situations, 9) continuing use even when use makes a physical or psychological problem worse, 10) developing tolerance, and 11) developing withdrawal symptoms (APA, 2013). Common marijuana withdrawal symptoms include: cravings, insomnia and other sleep difficulties, changes in appetite, anxiety, depression, irritability, and aggressive tendencies (Gorelick *et al*., 2012).

Youth use of marijuana tends to be higher in Western U.S. (9.09%) where a number of states have enacted medical and/or legalization laws and lowest in Southern U.S. (6.63%). Perceptions of risk of marijuana use has decreased among both youth and adults and in all regions of the country. In 2007/2008, 36.53 percent of Missouri youth age 12 to 17 reported that using marijuana occasionally was a great risk. By 2010/2011, this has dropped to 27.46 percent.



	2003-2004	2004-2005	2005-2006	2006-2007	2007-2008	2008-2009	2009-2010	2010-2011
Missouri	8.17%	7.53%	6.45%	6.41%	6.29%	5.94%	6.42%	7.28%
U.S.	7.73%	7.20%	6.74%	6.67%	6.67%	7.03%	7.38%	7.64%

Data source: SAMHSA, Center for Behavioral Health Statistics and Quality, National Survey on Drug Use and Health (2012a).

Marijuana addiction is the most common substance problem identified by adolescents entering substance abuse treatment. Nationally, about 73 percent of adolescent treatment admissions identify marijuana as the primary substance of abuse (SAMHSA, 2012b). The Missouri Division of Behavioral Health provides substance abuse treatment for about 9,500 Missourians with a marijuana problem each year. About 2,000 of these are adolescents. For adults admitted to treatment with marijuana addiction, most (88%) started using before age 18.

American Psychiatric Association (2013). Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders. 5.
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National Institute on Drug Abuse (2012). DrugFacts: Marijuana [website]. Retrieved at: http://www.drugabuse.gov/publications/drugfacts/marijuana.
Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration, Center for Behavioral Health Statistics and Quality (2012a). National Household Survey on Drug Use and Health, 2003-2011.
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